

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please add the paragraphs [0036.1] and [0036.2] as follows.

[0036.1] Turn now to FIG. 5 for a depiction of components of a direct pressure laminate product. Such products are typically fabricated from a base board 34, beneficially a medium or high density fiberboard or chipboard. One or more kraft paper sheets 36 (for clarity, FIG. 5 shows only one kraft paper sheet) impregnated with selected resins are located on and/or under the base board 34. A decorative cellulose paper sheet 38, about 0.15 mm thick and impregnated with a melamine solution, is on the base board 34. Over the decorative cellulose paper sheet 38 are one or more protective overlay sheets 30. The protective overlay sheet(s) are made of a highly resistant paper having corundum (AL_2O_3) impregnated in a melamine solution. It is also possible to include different papers between the decorative cellulose paper sheet and the base board.

[0036.2] The structure of FIG. 5 is then pressed under heat (180-220°C.) and pressure (approximately 20-30 Kg/cm²) until the resins thermoset. The result is an extremely hard and permanent product.

Please amend the paragraphs [0037] , [0038] , [0060], [0062] and [0078] as follows:

[0037] Figure [[5]] 6 generally illustrates components of a flooring panel according to the principles of the present invention.

[0038] Referring to Figure [[5]] 6, an embossed-in-registration flooring system may, for example, include at least one flooring panel. In one aspect of the present invention each flooring panel may include a board substrate 40 made out of a substrate material (e.g., a medium or high density fiberboard, chipboard, etc.), at least one base sheet 48 (e.g., a kraft paper sheet) impregnated with predetermined resins and arranged over and/or under the board substrate 40, a decorative paper sheet 44 about 0.15 mm thick and impregnated with a polymerizable resin (e.g., phenols such as melamine) arranged over the board substrate, and at least one protective overlay sheet 46 arranged over the decorative paper sheet 44. In one aspect of the present invention, each protective overlay sheet 46 may be formed from a highly resistant paper impregnated with a melamine solution containing corundum (Al_2O_3), silica, etc. In another aspect of the present invention, different papers may be arranged between the decorative paper sheet 44 and the board substrate 40. In one aspect of the present invention, the at least one protective overlay sheet 46 and the base sheet 48 may be impregnated with a resin. In another aspect of the present invention the resin impregnating the at least one protective overlay sheet 46 and the base sheet 48 may be different from the melamine resin used to impregnate the decorative paper sheet 44.

[0060] Referring back to Figure 8, each of the embossed-in-registration flooring panels 60 may, for example, exhibit an embossed-in-registration ceramic plank motif G1. The ceramic plank motif 100 may comprise a plurality of planks in the shape of squares, rectangles, triangles, circles, ovals, any other shape or design that are separated by grout lines. In one aspect of the present invention, widths of grout lines W_h , W_v (illustrated at 150 in Figure 9), and the intraboard grout width W may be substantially equal. When incorporating the snap-type tongue and groove locking mechanism into the embossed-in-registration flooring panels 60 the grout width adjacent the joints J1, J2, J3, and J4 on each embossed-in-registration laminate A, B, C,

and D are approximately one-half the intraboard grout width W . For example, the vertical plank grout width (W_v , illustrated at 150 in Figure 9) across joint J1 is made up of grout lines on embossed-in-registration laminates A, B, C and D, such that when the embossed-in-registration laminates A, B, C, and D are joined at J1 the vertical grout width (W_v) is approximately equal to (W). Accordingly, the grout width on any individual embossed-in-registration flooring panel 60 adjacent a joint is one-half of intraboard grout width (W). In another aspect of the present invention, the horizontal and vertical grout widths W_h and W_v may be controlled such they are substantially equal to the dimensions of the intraboard grout width W . It should be appreciated, however, that the dimensions of the grout widths in the embossed-in-registration flooring panels depend on the type of locking mechanism incorporated and the decorative motif exhibited.

[0062] In another aspect of the present invention, individual flooring panels within the embossed-in-registration flooring system 400 may be joined together with a snap-type mechanical system as illustrated in Figure 11 depicting a cross sectional view of Figure 10 along line 11-11. Again, alignment techniques used in the fabrication of the locking mechanism such that the embossed-in-registration laminate system 400 has a surface texture surface [[423]] 425 that is substantially continuous across joints, J5 and J6. Optionally, the embossed-in-registration laminates 60 have a protective padding layer 70 under the base sheet 48.

[0078] While it [[has]] is illustrated that the planks in Figures 13A, 13B, and 14A-14C are substantially rectangular, the principles of the present invention allow the planks within the flooring system to have other shapes and sizes (e.g., geometric, freeform, etc.) or different or similar dimensions such that the flooring panels may be assembled in a “mosaic”-type arrangement or other regular, semi-repetitious, or random arrangement of panels. Further, while

it is illustrated that each plank comprises an identical sub-panel layout, the principles of the present invention allow the planks within the flooring system to have other sub-panel layouts (e.g., other sub-panel shapes, sizes, etc.) The individual planks within the flooring system may be cut from a board such that joints between the flooring panels of the flooring system are not visible. Further, the planks within the flooring system illustrated in Figures 13 and 14 may be joined together with or without glue. Still further, while it has been discussed that the embossed surface texture is substantially aligned with an underlying decorative motif, it is to be understood that substantially any embossed surface texture may be imparted to the planks of the present invention, regardless of the underlying decorative motif. Still further, the decorative motifs and/or the embossed surface texture of one plank may not be aligned or even be remotely similar in appearance and/or texture to decorative motifs and/or embossed surface textures of adjacent planks.